

VIRGINIA ROANOKE RIVER BASIN ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
DECEMBER 16, 2002
Educational & Cultural Center Auditorium, Chatham, VA

Attendance: (all VA Commission members except H. Hamlet), DEQ: G. Anderson, J. Hill, M. Scanlan; DCR: T. Ott

- Senator Charles Hawkins called the meeting to order and briefly discussed the purpose of the group.
- The members introduced themselves.
- John Feild was nominated as Chairman and was seconded.
- Discussion ensued as to Vice Chairman and it was decided that there should be two vice chairs, representing rural and urban interests respectively. It is believed that a geographical balance is important.
- Charles Poindexter was nominated and was seconded. Lee Eddy was nominated but declined. Mike McEvoy was nominated and was seconded. The members voted to accept the nominees.
- Jason Hill of DEQ gave a presentation profiling the Roanoke River Basin.
- The Committee discussed the requirement of three non-legislative members serving on the Roanoke River Basin Bi-State Commission. An important factor that should be considered in the appointment process is geographic representation. It is believed essential that one of the appointees lives close to North Carolina and is familiar with the North Carolina Advisory group members. It is important for that member be knowledgeable of the Lake Gaston transfer to Virginia Beach and of North Carolina issues. Robert Conner indicated a willingness to serve in this capacity. The Committee discussed the negative impact of inter-basin transfers of water on agricultural uses and rural development opportunities. A decision was made to expedite the appointments. DEQ is to draft a letter from the Committee to the Governor providing a list of potential candidates. This list is to consist of the non-legislative members who are not the Chair or Vice- Chairs. No one expressed a reservation about serving in this manner.
- The generally good water quality in the basin was noted. Development of policy that protects the Roanoke River Basin was discussed. It is believed that this group is the appropriate mechanism to accomplish this task. It is important to figure out what other States are doing and to plan for future policy. As an example to monitor, the situation in California involving San Diego water needs and agricultural uses was mentioned. It was stated that the next meeting should be used to map some strategy and perhaps to set up some sub-committees.
- A move to put all "Scenic Rivers" under the purview of one commission was discussed. A motion was made to recommend that the Roanoke River Basin Scenic River Designation and responsibilities be put under this group. Discussion followed and there was concern that perhaps the "Scenic River" designation issues should not be interfered with. It was noted that the motion was meant to protect the Roanoke Basin from being a small part of the whole. The motion was seconded and passed.

- The Governor's recent announcement on a "Statewide Water Policy" was discussed. There was concern that this policy will usurp local/regional control of water use. It was recognized that water is a precious commodity and was stated that water will be as important next century as gas/oil in this century. Some wanted to express concern about the issue to the legislature and get information to the public. It was decided to view proposed legislation as it is introduced and comment at that time. Information should be distributed to members prior to the next meeting if possible.
- DEQ is to provide a summary of current Virginia Code and Federal Code concerning water control legislation.
- The importance of rural and urban communities understanding each other's water needs was discussed. It was commented that no one objects to in-basin withdrawals, rather those transfers to other basins are a concern. It was mentioned that water supply was a state/national problem. It was noted that the area population is very active in water issues and was instrumental in keeping large hog farms out of the region. It is important to have these people continually interested in the river basin.
- Tom Cain of Impact asked to speak to the Committee and suggested that due to the short period between the Virginia and North Carolina legislative sessions that the Committee should now begin planning to arrange a Bi-State meeting between the two state legislative sessions. He also wanted the Committee to be aware of the concept of "aquifer recharge". The Committee needs to ensure that water is returned to the basin.
- DEQ was asked to invite NCDENR's Callie Dodson to the next Committee meeting.
- The next meeting will be held in Richmond on January 22nd at 10 am. The location is undetermined at present but Senate Room A or B is proposed. DEQ will finalize the actual arrangements at a future time.